

Where color picture data are entered to be monotonized, the luminance distribution in the picture data is totaled (step 120 through step 140), a luminance correspondence relationship is set by utilizing the result of totaling (step 150), and the original picture is converted into a monotone picture after retouching its picture data on the basis of this luminance correspondence relationship, so that not only the picture quality can be improved compared with monotonization based simply on luminance alone, but also multi-stage conversion involving the improvement of luminance distribution and the processing of coloring can be collectively accomplished.